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The State University:

ITS WORK,
AND ITS PLACE IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM.

BY

J. A. Lippincott,

CHANCELLOR.

THE STATE UNIVERSITY:
ITS WORK, AND ITS PLACE IN THE PUBLIC
SCHOOL SYSTEM.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS,

DELIVERED IN

UNIVERSITY HALL, LAWRENCE, KANSAS,


SEPTEMBER 26, 1883.

BY

J. A. LIPPINCOTT,
¹¹
CHANCELLOR.

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ADDRESS.

I esteem myself happy, Mr. President, that, under circumstances so auspicious, I come into the office to which the Board of Regents of Kansas University has, with so flattering a courtesy, invited me.

The first duty which was laid upon me by the Board in my new relation, was that in the performance of which I stand here to-day, to give expression, in meager outline though it be, to some hastily collected thoughts concerning University work, and the relation, as it seems to me, which a State University should hold to the public school system, of which, indeed, it is a part.

I may be allowed here, perhaps, and this once, to speak out in the frankest possible manner, and say that it is not entirely without misgiving that I have contemplated the responsibilities which have thus been thrown upon me. The greatness of the work, not so much that which *is* as that which is to be, impresses me. The University must keep pace with the wonderful development of Kansas; indeed, it must, with other agencies, mold and direct that very development. A University such as the singular prosperity of this great and growing commonwealth makes possible, and yet itself one of the factors of that prosperity,—the University as it stands to-day in the liberal thought of the Regents and of the people of Kansas,—the ideal University, how shall it be realized! You will not criticize me

adversely, I am sure, that I confess to have paused a moment, and that with something of hesitation I surveyed the field thus presented to view. The work and its responsibilities seemed magnified in advance. Yet I trust we shall move forward none the less steadily, with no less of energy and determination, because we realize the magnitude of the undertaking before us.

And now let me say that, after a pretty careful survey, I have reached the conviction that the future of Kansas University is rich in splendid possibilities. The past and the present are full of encouragement. The foundations are well and securely laid. There has been a steady and healthy growth from small beginnings. The present is marked by a buoyant hopefulness. It may not be out of place to say in this connection, that whatever of success may distinguish the future, it will not be possible to write adequately the history of the University without a recognition of the masterful influence upon it of Chancellor MARVIN, and his faithful and able co-workers. All honor is due to the men whose care and devotion and labor have given to Kansas this honored institution of learning.

Another element of encouragement in contemplating the immediate future of the University, is to be found in the high conception of its position and functions entertained by the Board of Regents, and their fixed determination that the realization of that conception shall not long be delayed.

Then, again, I am convinced that the State University is an object of pride and of affection to the entire

commonwealth. If the people have divided upon political issues, all parties have united in the support of this institution. Its foundations were laid while Kansas was yet a Territory. It has grown under the fostering care of successive legislatures. The people of Kansas love their own creation, and will continue to make for it the most liberal provision.

Once more, the graduates of this seat of learning, already numerous in the State, will ever turn toward their *Alma Mater* with loving hearts and helping hands.

But why, it may be asked, should the State commit itself to educational enterprises? Are we sure that it does not transcend its natural powers when it establishes and maintains the public school? There have not been wanting in these days of quickened thought and radical opinions those who boldly declare that the tendency of civilization is, and *ought* to be, toward the curtailment, if not the absolute abrogation, of governmental powers. These advanced theories evidently contemplate an ideal State, wherein each individual is actuated by unselfish, noble motives. Here indeed would be no need of a government either to prohibit or to command. The common weal or highest good of all would grow spontaneously out of the combined and harmonious action of the individual citizens. It need not be said that such a state of society is yet far from realization among men.

But I think we may point out the ground whereon plainly the power and duty of a State rests to support both elementary schools and also colleges of the liberal arts and sciences. Our argument may be two-fold:

I. A liberal provision for the education of the young tends toward the suppression of pauperism and crime. It is universally recognized among civilized nations as the bounden duty of the State to restrain and punish its criminals, and to care for its helpless poor. Now we do not mean to say that a liberal education, however widely diffused, suppresses *all* crime, nor that it removes the *possibility* of extremest poverty; but we do say (and the assertion will not be contradicted) that the *tendency* is in this direction. With still more emphasis can we insist upon this declaration after having considered what is involved in *education*, and traced the relation to it which the school must maintain.

If, then, the influence of the school is to diminish the *probability* of crime and of pauperism, the State may rightly establish and maintain it. Nor can this position be consistently assailed by any one who acknowledges the duty of the civil magistrate to bind over to keep the peace a man who violently threatens the injury of another. "Prevention better than cure," is a good maxim for a State as well as for an individual.

II. Our second argument may be outlined as follows: The influence, greatness, glory of a State stand not in merely material possessions, but in the intelligence and character of its people.

A great race once made northern Africa blaze with glory. Here stood ancient Carthage, the mistress of the Mediterranean, the conqueror of Spain, the adventurous explorer of the unknown sea beyond the Pillars

of Hercules, while Rome was yet in her infancy. Here was Egypt, whose civilization ante-dated the glory of Sparta and of Athens. In later times here flourished Alexandria, the acknowledged center of the world's literature and science. This same land, whose fertility was such that it was called the granary of Europe, the great deeds of whose martial people are celebrated in ancient story, has in later years and for long centuries, in the hands of an inferior people, fallen into insignificance and obscurity. Again, our own land, with its fertile plains, its mountain ranges rich in minerals, lying for unknown ages in the unconscious possession of the red man, leaped at once into forms of wealth and of power when a higher, nobler, more intelligent, more energetic race of men succeeded to its ownership.

Now, it is admitted by every one that it is the right and duty of the State to carry forward great enterprises that are too burdensome for individual effort, and that yet manifestly contribute to the general welfare. If it may do this, it may with equal propriety establish and maintain institutions whose object is to develop in its people those forces of character and of intellect upon which its wealth, its power, its glory must ultimately rest.

We come now to the theme of the hour: The State School—what are its functions, and what may the State fairly expect from it in return for its support?

1. *The school must educate the intellectual faculties.* It would seem unnecessary to enlarge upon this obvi-

ous statement; yet it falls within my line of thought to say that *mere mental discipline* is a large part of this work. *This* is worth more than the formulated knowledge of the schools. To be able to think clearly, forcibly, accurately, is of more value than to possess the bare facts of all modern science. Thus far, I presume, there is agreement among educators. But just here the inquiry may be instituted, whether there may not be gained at the same time, and in the pursuit of the same study, both the mental discipline and the practical knowledge. On this question educators divide. The one party defends the ancient curriculum which holds the student to the classic languages, the mathematics and metaphysics; the other seeks to supplant these to a large extent with the so-called practical sciences. These maintain that the study of the physical sciences is disciplinary in a high degree, while it is also eminently practical. Where the line ought to be drawn between these opposing theories does not specially concern us to-day, though I may say that I do not believe that it *can* be drawn *permanently* in the wrong place. We may, however, hold firmly to this, that the education expected of the public school must be two-fold: *First*, The learning of valuable truth; and *secondly*, the disciplining of the intellectual powers.

There is another line of thought closely related to that which we have just entertained, and well worthy of consideration in this connection. The school should, to a certain extent, furnish stimulus to mental exertion. Exercise develops strength, whether of muscle or of thought.

Exercise in itself is irksome. To overcome the inertia of sloth, nature has made the amplest provision. The child does not run and climb *for the exercise there is in it*, but for the sake of the diversified objects which nature has herself placed before him, and which to him seem worthy of the pursuit. So, too, the school must not with changeless monotony set before the student the merely disciplinary exercise. I cannot blame the youth who wearies of the monotonous round of paradigm and problem. The school must do more for the student than require these tasks. It must come nearer to nature's method. If into the otherwise dull routine of school life there can be thrown some living question, judiciously selected out of the field of philosophy, or botany, or natural history, I am free to say that the time consumed will be more than made good by the added interest and quickened thought which it introduces. Whether by this or by some other means, the competent teacher will know how to awaken in his students a slumbering ambition, and to kindle an ennobling enthusiasm.

2. Secondly, *the school must assist in the development of character.* It is the power to think which most obviously exalts man above the brute creation, yet that exaltation is immeasurably heightened by the possibilities of moral character. To develop a delicate sense of honor, to implant a noble love of truth, to inspire a lofty patriotism, is the highest object of the public school. If this object be accomplished, the State, though never so liberal in its provision, is rendered a debtor to the school.

It is acknowledged that this is delicate and difficult work, but it constitutes the true sphere of the teacher's profession. To sit listlessly in the school-room, and require more listless children to repeat the too often meaningless words of the cold, lifeless printed page, is a travesty on true teaching. The teacher must be the life and inspiration of the school-room. His is an enthusiasm which must be contagious. In this very contagion of the inspiration of enthusiasm must be planted the seeds of true nobility of character. Mark well my meaning! It is not the teaching of maxims and proverbs of morality, though this should not be omitted—it is not the mere presentation of a code of ethics—it is this, enforced by a living and irresistible personality. Make the ground mellow, then cast in the seed. Induce in the student a quenchless thirst, then in inspired and inspiring words, and in the ardor of a conquering personality, set forth that which alone can satisfy desires thus created. Let there ever be held before the student in precept and example that which is worthy his supremest effort, the possession of the manliest traits of a truly noble character.

Is this impossible? Dr. Arnold of Rugby left the impress of his own personality upon a generation of leaders in English thought and action. Dr. Eliphalet Nott, of Union College, New York, yet lives in the worthy deeds of men made more noble in their aspirations by association with him. The public schools of New England are bearing fruit in every State of the Union. I beg you to bear in mind that the true

greatness of England rests not upon her prowess in arms, nor upon the profound and brilliant results achieved by her men of letters, but upon the sterling and uncompromising character of her people. This has been fostered and developed for generations by her great public schools. It is true that in these schools have been found but a tithe of her people, but there have been enough to hold the current in the right direction. It is true also that in some features these schools are not such models as we would select for imitation. There are sometimes exhibitions in them of coarseness and even of brutal tyranny of the strong over the weak; yet there has ever been maintained a high standard of the prominent traits of the sterling English character. Here has always been cultivated a profound loyalty which detests treason whether to country, to truth, or to personal honor. With all this in mind, England's place in European affairs is not difficult to understand. Her brilliant exploits by sea and land, the noble triumphs of her men of letters, the marvels of her industrial and mercantile enterprises, have ground from which to grow, and a stable foundation on which to rest.

All that has been outlined as the function of the State school—the gaining of practical knowledge, the culture of the intellectual powers, the development of character—must be accomplished, and perhaps with intensified enthusiasm, by the State University. This, however, is only the starting-point from which we must proceed to a full comprehension of the work and influence of the University.

We may as well state frankly that the position of the university as distinguished from the college is, as yet, quite unsettled in the American educational system. It is by some held to be simply a combination of colleges, each devoted to its own domain in the grand total of human knowledge and investigation. By others its sphere is limited to professional and practical work, while to the college is left the pursuit of those studies which are preparatory and disciplinary. Again, a university is held to be a school in which any applicant may find competent instruction in any useful study.

To reach the highest ideal, these definitions must, perhaps, be combined. The university is an association of colleges cultivating different fields of human knowledge. Within its various curricula any inquirer *may* find competent instruction in any desired line of investigation. Possibly this last statement must be limited by excluding dogmatic theology which no independent church could commit to the care of the State, and which the State, under our form of government, could not consistently assume.

But beyond this matter of teaching lies another duty of the university, equally clear and important. It is that of original investigation. Here, with reasonable success, it can repay the State a hundred fold. In this work it intensifies its own enthusiasm. Here it secures a firmer grasp upon its students; for nothing so grandly inspires the human soul as the forcing of nature's secret from her willing but reluctant hand.

In this grand pursuit, professor and student are most likely to forget their individuality in the oneness of their aim and enthusiasm. It is in this moment of fusion that the competent teacher finds the opportunity for his grandest work, and on a plane, too, higher than that of mere scholastic training.

Again, the University must keep abreast of the times. No department may be allowed to lag behind. There must be here a comprehension of the latest development in science, in art, in philosophy; and there must be some one competent to become its expounder while it yet has the freshness of novelty.

It may be allowable here to say that the University of Kansas has already honored itself in these respects. In some lines it is fully up to the times, and has gained for itself a fair name among men of science. What it has done in a single line, or in a few lines, let it nobly determine to do in all!

Once more, the University ought to be a conservatory of knowledge. I mean three things:

(1.) Its library should be the best in the State. Nay, more, it should be *the best possible*. Here should be gathered together, as in a great depository, the vast stores of human knowledge that have been committed to the safe-keeping of the printed page. So complete should this be, that scholars, otherwise unconnected with the institution, but engaged in scientific and literary work, should be attracted to the seat of the University for the sake of the facilities offered in every line of thought and investigation.

(2.) Its cabinets in the various lines of natural history, mineralogy, etc., should be correspondingly complete. These will be the more valuable in manifold ways if they are mainly the collections of the University itself, and thus the visible exponents of its own enthusiasm and industry.

This involves the erection of additional buildings. There will be demanded a fire-proof Library Hall and a fire-proof Natural History Hall, thus releasing rooms in the main University building that will be greatly needed for other purposes. In addition, in the near future, we must have a thoroughly equipped Astronomical Observatory; a hall devoted to Physics, and perhaps yet other buildings needed as the University grows to its place among the best of American colleges. Indeed, the time will come when our beautiful Mount Oread, the gift of Gov. Robinson to the State, shall be crowned with beautiful and stately structures needed in the work of the University, and erected by the munificence of a generous State, and of its public-spirited citizens.

(3.) It should gather about itself a host of students and scholars in all the walks of science, literature, art, and philosophy; for it is an evident truth that a university consists not of stately structures, nor of immense libraries, nor of completed cabinets, nor of all these combined; but of enthusiastic scholar-students who know how to make thorough, competent use of all these needed adjuncts of the school.

When these things shall have been realized,—when

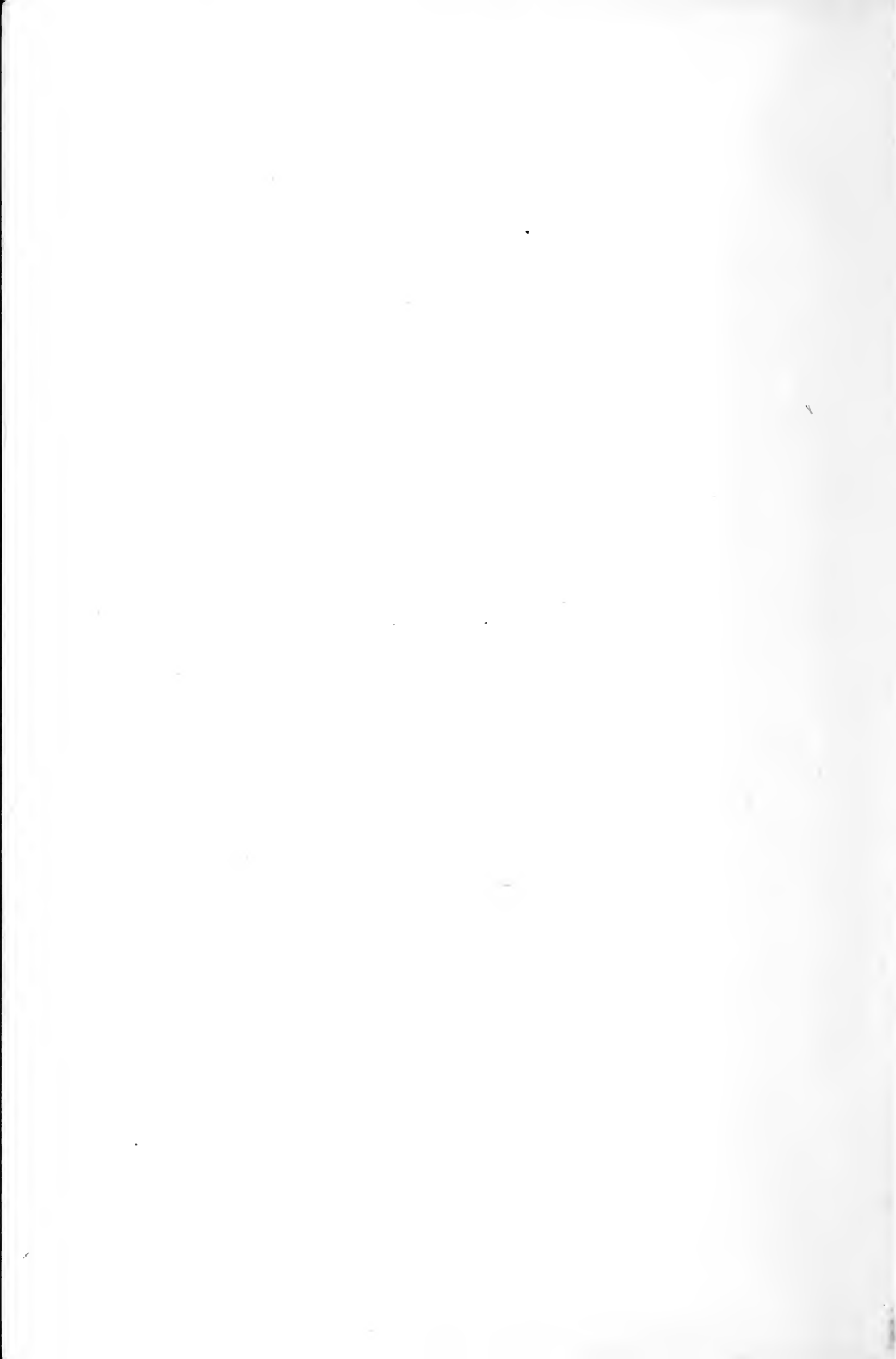
the library and the various cabinets shall have been carried well on toward completion, when men of scientific and scholarly taste shall have been brought together, is it too much to hope that many, if not all the colleges in the State of Kansas, the technical schools, the denominational institutions, may find it to their interest to come into close relations with the State University? If such a close relationship and harmony of action among these diverse educational agencies can be accomplished, it is fair to presume that it will be with equal profit to the University itself, while the people of the State will become incalculably the gainers.

Once more, the University should be an essential part of the State system of public schools. In this system there should be no chasm difficult of passage. The High School must join hands on the one side with the more elementary grades, and on the other with the University. In this series of schools all must be advanced together. If the University should at a single bound stride into the position which, perhaps, our ardent fancy pictures for the undeveloped future, it would sever its relations with the system, and lose its grand opportunity. On the contrary, if it maintain its proper relations with the Academies and High Schools of the commonwealth; if with wisdom and patience it wait and work in harmony with them; then the time will come in the development of the State, and that, too, in the near future, when its halls shall be crowded with young men and women well prepared in the lower schools, and eager for its best work.

Yet in all this let us not lose sight of the essential fact that each class of schools has a definite work to accomplish within its own sphere. In the more elementary grades, the great mass of our people receive not only their first but their final scholastic training. These schools must supply the needs of their most numerous patrons. Yet in the same schools are prepared those who advance to the High School. Again from the High School many thousands of boys and girls go out into the actual business of life. A comparative few graduate into the University. Not for these few, but for the many, must the curriculum of the High School be arranged; yet, while these prepare for business, others, their class-mates in some branches, prepare for a yet more advanced course of study. Thus, the graded school cannot do the work of the University, and ought not to try; but it can prepare its pupils for the college classes. So, too, the University should not be burdened with preparatory instruction; but it can supplement that of the High School and Academy. More than that: created by the State, and liberally furnished beyond other and less favored institutions with facilities for distinctive work, it should suggest methods and furnish inspiration resulting in incalculable good to every school, whether public or private, in the State.

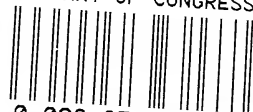
Thus the University helps all and antagonizes none. It becomes a center of educational influence which is felt with good effect in the remotest counties.

In this sketch of the ideal university have I drawn too much upon my imagination? Or, have I made perilous my position by creating too large an expectation? Let me remind you that the true workman ever holds in mind an ideal which serves as a model for his less perfect handicraft. More than this, the actual creation of his workmanship falls below his model—often immeasurably below it. Further still, it may be said that the ideal itself grows more rapidly toward perfection than his actual work. If, then, our ideal university seems to stand out discouragingly beyond that which we see actually accomplished, it is only natural that it shall be so. It is the condition of healthy growth. We are building upward. The State has given us the foundation, and stands by us with liberal hand. We may appropriate here a maxim of the common law, "*Cujus est solum, ejus est usque ad coelum;*" and it is our privilege and our duty to build up toward the skies. We shall follow our ideal, yet without overtaking it; for, like the mirage in the desert, it will move on before us, yet, unlike the mirage, only to attract us into a more noble and more ennobling view of that at which we shall have striven—the perfected University of the State of Kansas.





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